

The Morning Astorian.

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MOST SERIOUS REVERSE YET

Lord Methuen's Check Causes
Deep Sorrow In England.

SITUATION IS VERY GRAVE

Entire Reserves Will Be Called Out
and 30,000 Additional Men Sent
to Africa Immediately.

LONDON, Dec. 13.—The war office received the following dispatch from General Methuen, dated Tuesday, December 12:

"Our artillery shelled a very strong position held by the enemy in a big high kopje, from 4 until dusk Sunday. It rained hard last night. The Highland brigade attacked at daybreak on Monday the south end of the kopje. The attack was properly timed, but failed. The guards were ordered to protect the Highlanders' right and rear, cavalry and mounted infantry, with a howitzer, artillery battery. We attacked the enemy on the left and the guards, on the right, were supported by field artillery and howitzer artillery. They shelled the position from daybreak and at 1.15 I sent the Guards to the outcrops on the left, took the position extending, including the kopje, for a distance of six miles to Modder river. Today I am holding my position and entrenching myself. I had to face at least 12,000 men. Our loss was great."

LONDON, Dec. 14.—A most important battle seems to be going on between the British and the Boers. This morning's newspapers admit that Lord Methuen's check at Magersfontein is the most serious event the war has yet produced.

It is estimated here that Lord Methuen's forces amounted to 11,000 and perhaps more. No reliable estimates of his losses have yet been received. They are believed to have been at least 4,000. All papers comment upon the extreme gravity of the situation and upon the momentous decision Lord Methuen now has to take—whether to remain at Modder river or retire to Orange river.

The Times says: "At least 30,000 additional men must be sent out. The entire available reserve must be called up and the militia and volunteers turned to account. Efforts must be made to increase the local colonial forces and further offers of troops from Canada and other colonies must be sought and accepted."

All eyes are now turned hopefully to General Buller who, taking into account the troops with General White at Ladysmith, has altogether 30,000 men.

WOUNDED AT MODDER

ORANGE RIVER, Cape Colony, Dec. 12.—Three hundred and twenty British wounded, including 27 officers, have arrived here from Modder river.

AND HELP IS AFAR.

FRERE CAP, Natal, Tuesday, Dec. 12.—The Boers are still shelling Ladysmith. The heat is terrific.

HUNTING A SCAPE GOAT.

British Public Want Somebody to Blame the Blame of South African Reverse.

NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—A dispatch to the Tribune from London, says:

"The Mail publishes this morning evidence of Russian activity at Centa and Tangle, and in Central Asia and Abyssinia and urges its readers to watch the movements of Russia, France and probably another power in the event of any further revenue to British troops in South Africa."

There are current rumors in high circles that Lord Salisbury, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and other members of the cabinet are now angry with Mr. Chamberlain for not warning them of the magnitude of what was before the government. They cannot justify him as a body fell into a Dutch ambush, as well as the war office.

Whatever may be the grievances of the military staff or Mr. Chamberlain's own colleagues, the ministry now has the united country behind it in carrying on the war to the bitter end. The Stormberg reverse checked intense humiliation, but there are no signs of flinching from the work which England has undertaken.

The Dutch forces have not followed up their victory at Stormberg by attacking General Gatacre at Mafeking, and the British reverse has not interrupted French's cautious advance toward Coliburg, skirmishing having been removed on Monday. General Gatacre's second report of his disastrous battle is badly written and leaves

the mystery of the capture of portions of two battalions unsolved.

The unfortunate general has no sense of humor, or he would have avoided saying that the policemen took the British army "round some miles and landed in an impossible position," and that he had sent the Irish rifles and the "fighting fifth" to Stormstrom to recuperate. Probably certainly is not an ideal convalescent's home. While he admits that the distances were underestimated, he acquits his guides of intentional error and thereby of deliberate treachery. While it is not clear it is evident from the belated dispatches that after failing himself completely entrapped, he collected his force and had a running fight from ridge to ridge for nine miles in the retreat, losing two guns and that the excellent handling of the field battery alone enabled the main body to escape.

The Fusiliers and the Irish rifles were probably captured in small groups at different points, and many of them were unable to join the column when the retreat was begun. The number of missing men from the Fusiliers is increased by sixty in General Gatacre's report.

President M'Kinnon accounts for 43 prisoners in one dispatch and 672 in another.

THE FINANCIAL DEBATE.

Republican Leaders Determined to Push It to a Finish.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13.—The currency debate in the house lasted from 11 o'clock this morning until 10:30 tonight, with a recess of three hours for dinner. The pressure for time to speak continued, as most members desire to make contributions to the literature of the occasion. Much of it, however, has to be for home consumption.

There has been very little cross-firing thus far and no exciting or dramatic incidents. So far as known 12 Democrats, eight from New York, two from Pennsylvania and one each from Maryland and Massachusetts, will vote for the bill.

Chairman of the committee, said that the sentiment of his people was for the gold standard. Since the inauguration of McKinley, he said, everything has been—commodities, labor, humanity and the flag—everything except the democratic party. That has been steadily going down hill. (Laughter and applause.)

The house adopted a resolution for a holiday recess from Wednesday, December 20 to Wednesday, January 3. Richardson, of Tennessee, the minority leader, asked that the house adjourn over tomorrow to give members an opportunity to participate in the Washington memorial exercises, but Payne, the majority leader, objected, saying George Washington, if alive, he thought, would be in favor of the house proceeding with the transaction of business.

THE PHILIPPINE CABLE.

Probability that the Project of the Navy Department Will Be Given Preference.

NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—A special to the Tribune from Washington, says: "The naval project for a Pacific cable connecting San Francisco, Honolulu, Guam and the Philippines gives greater promise of practicability than other plans suggested to congress for facilitating commercial and military communications in that ocean and the bill embodying its features and authorizing its construction and maintenance, which has been introduced by Senator Hale, is likely to become a law."

The only cable surveys of a route across the Pacific have been made by the navy, and they have enabled the naval authorities to count the cost of the enterprise and its feasibility with confident accuracy. The army scheme for a cable to remain always a military line has been planned wholly on theoretical considerations involving a mid-ocean landing place on a coral rock frequently submerged each year in the stormy season.

The private cable companies which have been rivals in seeking government aid have made to surveys and their projects have favored strongly of speculation at government expense. The principal private company asks congress to give it a charter and guarantee a subsidy of \$100,000 annually for twenty years. During that period it offers to carry government messages free and thereafter will charge the government one-half commercial rates. Under this plan the government would pay out \$8,000,000 and in the end the company would have the cable and could sell it to England, Germany, Russia, or Japan.

The naval project calls for a \$10,000,000 plant including submarine lines, stations and equipment, to be laid by regular naval vessels and to be delivered when completed to the postmaster-general who will manage, operate and maintain the service in the same manner as the postal system, with a single regard for the public interest. The Tribune on Nov. 10, published the official chart of the surveys

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THE OLD DADDY NOW CAPTURED

Mabini, Head and Front of Philippine Insurrection, a Prisoner.

ANOTHER PROVINCE TAKEN

Cayagan Surrenders Unconditionally
to Captain McCalla of Cruiser Newark—The End About Reached.

MANILA, Dec. 13.—General Tirona, commanding the Philippines in the province of Cavite, surrendered the entire province of Aparri, December 11, to Captain McCalla, of the United States cruiser Newark. Captain McCalla appointed him civil governor of the province, subject to the approval of General Otis.

The surrender was with the honors of war.

MANILA, Dec. 13.—The following dispatch, dated Cavite, Dec. 5, has been received from the correspondent of the Associated Press with Major March's battalion:

"Major March, with captains Jenkins and Cunningham, Lieutenants Tompkins, Tucker, McCalla and Fowles and 125 men, is about to start for Manila, the principal town in the province of that name to the east through an absolutely desolate country and over a mountain 10,000 feet high."

He is pursuing Aguinaldo, whose exact, now reduced to 50 men, is known to be there. According to natives Aguinaldo intends to disguise himself and take a circuitous trail toward Bayambang, in this province of Nueva Vizcaya.

Major March, with 100 men, arrived at Cavite, in the heart of the Tula mountains on the evening of December 2, about twenty hours behind Aguinaldo, who had believed he had found an inaccessible refuge.

On December 2nd the American commander had a wonderful fight in a cloud-enveloped mountain pass, 2,000 feet above sea level, completely routing General Gregorio del Pilar's force of 300 picked men, in a position almost strong enough to rival Thermopylae.

General Pilar fought at the front of his men, urging them to make a stand, until the ball of a sharpshooter pierced his head. His followers tried to carry away his body, but were compelled to lay it down. Two of the Americans were killed.

At Dapaz the Americans learned that Aguinaldo, with a few men and three women, all carried on litters borne by Igorotes, has passed along his same trail to Cavite, where he was during the fight. The runner had brought him news of the death of his chief of staff. He was greatly affected and prepared instantly for flight.

General Conception, with six officers who had deserted Aguinaldo, surrendered when Major March reached Cavite, province of Lepanto.

"On arriving at Cavite, Major March's battalion was without food, except rice, and had only a small supply of ammunition. Major March secured five days' rations, made arrangements for his wounded and sick, and choosing 20 mounted and 100 unmounted men, resumed the chase at daybreak."

CAPTURE OF MABINI

Generally regarded by Washington Authorities as More Important Than Would Be That of Aguinaldo.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12.—The secretary of war regards the information conveyed in General Otis' dispatches today as the most important that has come to hand for months past.

The capture of Mabini, reported by MacArthur from Bayambang, is especially gratifying. Members of the Philippine commission now in Washington declare without reserve that Mabini was the head and front of the insurrection. Aguinaldo was only a figurehead. Mabini was the brain and director of power behind him. He is a paralytic old man, but of extraordinary ability, and his counsels are always conclusive with the Filipinos. He was concerned in the first uprising against the Spaniards.

He was also the financial strength of the movement, as without his backing, Aguinaldo would have had no credit. Next in importance to the capture of Mabini in the developments of the campaign was the bold stroke of Captain McCalla, of the Newark, in capturing the whole province of Cavite. With MacArthur holding the province of Isabela adjoining, and Young holding out on the opposite or western shore of the upper peninsula, the American forces are now in technical

THE BATTLE WAS SEVERE

Gallant Advance of the British
Against Entrenched Boers.

THE TERRIBLE LOSS OF LIFE

Highlanders Mowed Down and Black Watch Regiment Almost Entirely Wiped Out.

LONDON, Dec. 14.—Julian Ralph, describing the battle of Magersfontein, in a special to the Daily Mail, says:

"The Boers were entrenched at Magersfontein, four miles north of Modder river. At dawn Monday the Highlanders, advancing across the veldt, were suddenly subjected to a murderous fire from trenches about 200 yards in front. The greater part of the fearful loss of the day was thus suffered in a single minute."

"Startled and overwhelmed, the brigade retired quickly, but soon rallied and retained their position. This was on the left."

"On the right the guards brigade advanced across the veldt against other trenches and fought an invisible foe for 15 hours."

"At 11 in the morning the Gordon Highlanders were sent forward. The Boers allowed them to pass one line of trenches and then enfiladed them. We took the Boer trenches with artillery throughout the day. The fighting only ceased with nightfall."

THE TERRIBLE BOER RIFLE.

English Troops Itaked by Withering Volleys.

MODDER RIVER, Dec. 12.—The British casualties included the Marquis of Winchester, major of the second battalion of Coldstream guards, who was killed, and Colonel Downham, of the first battalion of Gordon Highlanders, who was mortally wounded.

When the Highlanders met the murderous point blank fire of the Boers about 200 were mowed down. The Black Watch regiment on reforming was able to muster only 160 men. The Boers lost heavily in trenches and also in wire entanglement when they came into the open in an attempt to flank the British.

The terrible British artillery fire provoked no response except from the Boers' rifles until nearly 4 o'clock in the afternoon when the Gordon Highlanders formed to renew the attack on an entrenched kopje. They advanced with the utmost gallantry to attack the Boers close to the place where they lay their dead and wounded comrades of the Highland brigade.

The enemy opened with a heavy shrapnel fire as the British advanced and it was found physically impossible to take the Boer trenches. The British got within 200 yards but could

(Continued on page 4.)

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